



15 day Coastal Explorer

Starting in Queenstown, the adventure capital, spend some time relaxing or enjoying the many wonderful activities here. A full day trip to Doubtful Sound including a Wilderness Cruise is included. Head north to the wild West Coast and the unique glacier region before crossing the Southern Alps to the Pacific Ocean and its abundance of wildlife at Kaikoura. A day to sample the fine produce of Marlborough before heading into Abel Tasman National Park, famous for its golden sand beaches, great walking tracks and kayaking. Complete the coastal loop by exploring the history rich north west coastline from Westport to Greymouth before taking the Tranz Alpine train across the Alps and into Christchurch.

Starts in: Queenstown
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 15days / 14nights
 Accommodation: Motels
 Can be customised: Yes

This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.



Inclusions:

Includes: Late model rental cars

Includes: Unlimited kms

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)

Included activity: Private Transfer Queenstown Airport to your Accommodation

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Shared Transfer from the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring Company

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Queenstown with RealNZ

Day 1



Private Transfer Queenstown Airport to your Accommodation

On arrival you will be met by a private driver and delivered to your Queenstown accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Skyline Gondola Queenstown and 3 Luge Rides

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 2



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by a plethora of historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-ski.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Canyon River Jet Boat Adventure

Riding the iconic 'Big Red' Jet Boat through the narrow Shotover Canyon is an exhilarating experience not to be missed. Your skilled jet boat driver pushes the boat to 85 kph, skimming across shallow water and past towering canyon walls. This 25 minute white water ride includes 360 degree spins and maximum thrills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Experience a tasting journey through three of Central Otago's incredibly scenic and varying wine sub-regions; Gibbston, Bannockburn and Cromwell. Visit three boutique vineyards, tasting their unique cool climate wines and discover why the Central Otago region has become world-renowned in its own right.

Indulge at a fourth vineyard restaurant for a platter-style lunch, savouring the finest and freshest produce, accompanied with a wine flight. There will also be an opportunity to retrace history when you stroll through the charming historical settlement of Old Cromwell.

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Day 3



Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Queenstown

On boarding the luxury glass-roofed coach in Queenstown, enjoy a relaxing trip along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Manapouri. From Pearl Harbour, Manapouri, you cruise across picturesque Lake Manapouri to West Arm and then travel by coach over Wilmot Pass through dense rainforest. There are opportunities along the way to examine the plant life and view the spectacular scenery. Once at Doubtful Sound you board the catamaran, Commander Peak, for a 3 hour cruise of beautiful Doubtful Sound to the Tasman Sea. On board there is excellent viewing of waterfalls, rainforest and mountains. Of particular interest, if sighted, are fur seals basking on the rocks, or a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins. Rare Fiordland crested penguins are sometimes encountered in the right season. An interesting on board commentary keeps you informed and on the return journey, the vessel's engines are turned off and visitors are treated to the 'Sound of Silence'.

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Day 4



Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Queenstown to Franz Josef Glacier via Wanaka

From Queenstown you'll cross the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in New Zealand to arrive in the Alpine town of Wanaka, gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park. Skirting the shores of both Lake Wanaka and Hawea, you will enter the small town of Makarora. Stop at Blue Pools for a 1-hour return walk through the native beech forest to a glacier-fed swimming hole. Continue on through the remote seaside settlement of Haast before heading up the wild West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beaches occasionally. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. Keep heading North and be sure to enjoy the view of the ever-changing towering snowcapped Southern Alps Mountain Range. Fox Glacier welcomes you first, then comes your destination for the night Franz Josef township.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village and offers affordable and stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 5



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small but lively town in the heart of the West Coast, known for its 12 km long glacier. Surrounded by lush rainforest-clad mountains the township has a vibrant and bustling atmosphere. To see the ice from a viewpoint you can walk along the valley floor to the viewpoint below the terminal face. However, to go on the glacier itself you must take a licensed helicopter tour.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with The Helicopter Line

Take a scenic flight over all three Franz Josef glacier icefalls. Landing high on the glacier take a two hour guided trip through some of the most beautiful terrain in the country. Your guide will choose the route as you go through a wonderland of blue ice and frozen pinnacles. You'll have endless views of the surrounding mountains and rainforest as well as plenty of opportunities to take photographs. Sure to be one of the most memorable experiences you have while you are in New Zealand. Should weather not be suitable to take this flight you are able to transfer your booking onto a similar tour on any of the Helicopter Line operations in Queenstown or Mt Cook.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village and offers affordable and stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 6



Franz Josef to Punakaiki

Driving north on State Highway 6 you pass through many small West Coast towns. Hari Hari is the township that Guy Menzies decided to land in (or rather crash land) as he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman. Ross is the site of an old gold mining town and some of the old buildings remain. You can even pan for gold. The craft and gift stores in Hokitika are excellent with a great range of locally made items and if you want to explore further here then the Hokitika Gorge is worthy of a detour.

Just south of Greymouth is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear. Be sure to stop at the supermarket in Greymouth as there is none in Punakaiki. Punakaiki is a highlight of this drive so allow plenty of time to walk the paths and explore the formations.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Underworld Adventures - Glowworm Cave Tour

Delve into an ancient wonderland of stalactites, stalagmites and glowworms in the enormous Nile River Caves. At the Charleston Base you'll be equipped with caving helmets, coats and boots and then taken to the Nile River Rainforest Train where you'll travel through the forest before exploring the dry upper levels of the Aranui Entrance series. Recently discovered, the Metro cave is one of only several caves in the world left in a natural unspoiled state. Exploring the lower level of the cave system, in the dark you will find galaxies of glow worms spanning over you. Your guides will enrich your journey with captivating illustrations, explanations and stories connecting you with this special place. After emerging back to the daylight a short stroll leads back to the train. It is important you understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Underworld Rafting and Glowworm Experience with Underworld Adventures

A superb four hour Black Water Rafting adventure in the Paparoa National Park. You meander through a paradise of stalactites and stalagmites in the upper dry levels of the cave. You then enter a slow moving underground river on which you float in your tube using only the natural light of an awe inspiring display of glow worms for navigation. Emerge from the cave into a remote and untouched world before leaving its tranquility for the rushing bubbling waters of the low grade Nile River Rapids. It is important you understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Your accommodation: Havenz Punakaiki (Self check in required)

Havenz Punakaiki offers a selection of traditional Kiwi hideaways: luxury homes, holiday apartments and baches. These holiday retreats are situated in tranquil native forest and offer easy access to beaches, the Paparoa National Park and the famous Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Blowholes.



Day 7



Punakaiki to Arthur's Pass National Park

Today you'll head south towards Greymouth, before turning onto State Highway 73 as you make your way to Arthur's Pass. Winding your way up and over the Southern Alps, this route takes you through some of the most spectacular scenery in the country, even in the rain when hundreds of waterfalls cascade down the bush clad hillsides.

Originally the road was used as a pass by the Maori as they made their seasonal passage to collect Greenstone in the West Coast mountains. Following the 1800's gold rush a road and railway was developed through the area. Today, the railway is used predominantly for the world renowned TranzAlpine Scenic Train, transporting several hundred tourists per day from Christchurch to Greymouth or the other way round. Continue on through the Otira Gorge, before arriving at your destination for the night, Arthur's Pass.

Note: If you're feeling like a more leisurely drive, there is the option to take a more scenic route around Lake Brunner. Well signposted, this road begins just before the town of Kumara.

Walking tracks in Arthurs Pass National Park

Within Arthur's Pass there are many short walks to suit all ages and abilities. Located in the Arthur's Pass Village is a Department of Conservation information centre where you can get updates on track conditions and track suitability as well as learn about the natural history of the area and its people.

Listed below is a selection of short walks.

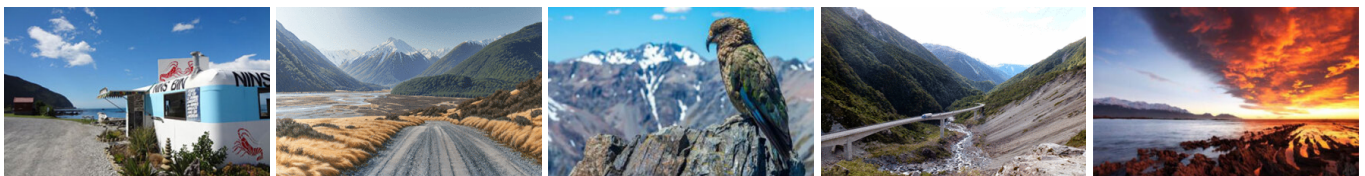
1. Millennium Walk - Time: 10 minutes return
2. Devils Punchbowl Waterfall Walk - Time: One hour return
3. Arthur's Pass Walking Track - Time: One hour 20 minutes (one way)
4. Dobson Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
5. Old Coach Road Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
6. Cockayne Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return

Your accommodation: Arthurs Pass Alpine Motel

Located right in the village this is the ideal location to enjoy and explore Arthur's Pass National Park. Close to cafes and the visitor centre your accommodation is in comfortable self contained units.



Day 8



Arthur's Pass to Kaikoura

Travelling from the Southern Alps to the Coast, this drive offers spectacular views of braided river valleys. You'll travel through Castle Hill Scenic Reserve, dotted with remarkable rocky outcrops, popular for hiking.

Descending onto the Canterbury Plains, you'll travel through the rich farmland surrounding Christchurch before turning North through the small towns of Rangiora and Oxford. You'll then travel on State Highway 1 through the Waipara Valley. If you have plenty of time be sure to stop at Hanmer Springs for a soak in the hot mineral pools.

The road hugs the coast for the final stretch of this drive, before arriving at your destination, Kaikoura. Keep a lookout for dolphins as they are often seen swimming just off the coastline as well as New Zealand fur seals basking by the roadside.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikoura

Experience New Zealand's only marine based whale watching company. Whale Watch Kaikoura offer a once-in-a-lifetime, up close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dusky dolphins and albatross. Depending on the season you may also see pilot, blue and southern right whales as well as migrating humpbacks. Often orcas can be spotted here and the world's smallest dolphin, the Hector's, occasionally make an appearance.

Cruise in style on modern catamarans, specifically designed for whale watching, featuring large passenger cabins and outside viewing decks. Passenger numbers for each tour are kept below the vessel carrying capacity to ensure your tour experience remains a personal one.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikoura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 9



Kaikoura to Blenheim

Heading north from Kaikoura, the road hugs the shore for approximately 50 kilometres and offers many opportunities to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. One of the best seal watching locations is Ohau Point (25km north of Kaikoura), where you can observe the adults on the shoreline and the pups frolicking in the waterfall, just a short walk from the road (signposted). As you drive you will have turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean to your east and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine producing region. Blenheim sits right at the heart of Marlborough and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Half Day Wine Tour

An afternoon among the vines! Be immersed in the Marlborough wine country with the Sounds Connection half day wine tour. You'll be collected from your accommodation and taken through three or four hand-picked wineries to taste the award-winning produce this region is known for. You'll also hear about the history of winemaking in Marlborough as well as learning the unique processes each winery goes through. A lunch stop is not included in this tour so we do advise you have something to eat prior to this activity.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Blenheim

In a quiet location and close to town, Bella Vista Motel is in the heart of Blenheim. Surrounded by the world-famous Marlborough wine growing area and just a few minutes walk from a wide variety of restaurants and bars.



Day 10



Blenheim to Abel Tasman National Park via Queen Charlotte Drive

Take a short drive to the small port of Picton where the Interislander ferry connects with Wellington. A bustling seaside destination, Picton is well equipped with shops, cafes and is also the starting point for the famous Queen Charlotte Walk. You'll travel along Queen Charlotte Drive, traversing the length of the Marlborough Sounds coastline. Magnificent views are abundant so be sure to make time to stop and enjoy the scenery as you go.

Continue through the small port town of Havelock, home to a variety of cafes and restaurants. The highway between Nelson and Picton crosses the pelorus river, and at this junction you'll find the famous pelorus bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks, the most popular a 30 minute loop through beech, rimu, and totara forest. Traverse Tasman Bay passing through Motueka to arrive on the outskirts of Abel Tasman National Park.

Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 11



Abel Tasman National Park

Abel Tasman National Park, known for its coastal hiking track has an abundance of golden beaches, inlets and private lagoons. The park has a mild climate and is a special place to visit at any time of the year. Why not enjoy a scenic cruise through the Sounds or take a kayaking tour around its many sheltered bays? Relax to the melodious birdsong and get up close to some of the parks many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds and marine mammals fur seals and dolphins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Beaches, Bays and Seals Guided Sea Kayaking Trip Including Picnic Lunch

Combining the best of the Abel Tasman, this trip showcases incredible beaches, coastal walks and native wildlife. First you'll meet your guide and join the 9.30 am Vista Cruise along the magnificent coastline to Torrent Bay. You'll then arrive at Torrent Bay Lodge and complete a full training session and safety briefing before moving on to the water in kayaks to discover beautiful beaches, tidal estuaries and rivers.

Stop for a picnic lunch in a sheltered cove and take some time to swim, explore or sunbathe on the sand. On your return trip, if the winds are favourable, sails will be hoisted and you'll sail back via Pinnacle Island to view the seal colony there - if you're lucky, you may even see some resident blue penguins at the same time. Arriving back at Torrent Bay Lodge, freshen up with a hot shower and re-join the vista cruise back to Kaiteriteri, arriving at 4.10 pm.

During the summer there is the option to enjoy an unguided two hour coastal bush walk after the kayaking trip. Walk around the picturesque Torrent Bay Lagoon via Cleopatra's Pool to the anchorage where you will re-join the boat back to Kaiteriteri. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Abel Tasman National Park Cruise and Walk Open Day Pass

Abel Tasman Cruises combined with short bush walks are a great way to experience this beautiful national park. Join Abel Tasman Wilson's Experiences' boat at Kaiteriteri for your Abel Tasman National Park Cruise. The boat hugs the shore, travelling in close to the idyllic beaches. Your skipper provides a full commentary of the trip. Take your own lunch or pre-order a prepared lunch the night before. The following are some of the more popular cruise and walk options you can choose from.

Vista Scenic Cruise

Cruise from Kaiteriteri, through the Astrolabe Roadstead to Torrent Bay and Bark Bay, calling into picturesque beaches and coves where walkers and kayakers are transferred to golden-sand beaches. Pause to view the antics at Tonga Island Seal Colony in the Marine Reserve, then continue past isolated northern beaches to the long sweep of burnished sands at Totaranui.

Pitt Head Loop

Cruise through the sheltered waters of the Astrolabe Roadstead to disembark at Anchorage Beach. There you can choose to take a leisurely stroll to Te Pukatea Bay or walk the Pitt Head Track. Alternatively relax on the beach and go swimming in the calm azure waters. Walking time is around 1 hour.

Seals and Beach

For the best of everything, this trip is for you. Take a scenic cruise into Tonga Island Marine Reserve, pausing to watch the antics at its resident Fur Seal Colony. Land at historic Tonga Quarry beach then take a walk for about 2 hrs 15 mins (4.1 kms, 2.5 miles) over a forested saddle and around spectacular Bark Bay estuary with its cascading waterfalls.

Bark Bay Falls

From the sheltered beach at Kaiteriteri, cruise past the sculpted granite headlands and islands. Pause to view the long, golden, forest-fringed beaches of Torrent Bay. Disembark at Medlands Beach. A short stroll takes you to popular, sheltered Bark Bay with its pleasantly shaded camping area. Swim in calm azure waters, sunbathe or relax in the shade of native forest trees. A forested track around the estuary takes you to Bark Bay Falls (approx. 1 hour return).

Swing Bridge, Bush and Beach

Cruise into the heart of the National Park with full commentary to introduce you to this fascinating coastline. Disembark at idyllic Medlands Beach, where you will walk to the long golden-sand beach of Anchorage, via Torrent Bay (approx. 4hrs) The track weaves through sunny groves of Manuka and fern between breathtaking views of the granite coast and lush gullies of mature forest, to reach tranquil forest pools. Cross the rushing Falls River by an impressive swing bridge. Allow extra time to take a short side track beside a crystal forest stream to visit tranquil Cleopatra's Pool.

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Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

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Day 12



Marahau to Westport

Today travel along the Buller Gorge home to spectacular scenery. Head through the sleepy town of Murchison, a great place to stop for lunch then continue on to Inangahua, the first major town in the region. You'll then come to Whites Creek - where New Zealand's longest swing bridge is located. As you cross the river take in the magnificent views of the gorge before drive a short way further to arrive in Westport, the largest town on the Northern West Coast.

Your accommodation: Buller Bridge Motel

Ideally located in Westport this well equipped motel is adjacent to the Buller River and Millennium Walkway but also just a few minutes walk from the town centre



Day 13



Westport to Greymouth

Cape Foulwind just south of Westport is home to a seal colony and the short walk provides some spectacular scenery. The spectacular West Coast coastline guides you to Paparoa National Park and to Punakaiki. A stop at the pancake rocks is a highlight of this drive so allow plenty of time to walk the paths and explore the formations.

Greymouth sits on the Grey River almost at the western end of State Highway 73. It's the largest town on the coast and as such is the commercial centre. A fine small town centre with some interesting buildings makes it a pleasant place to stroll or if you are feeling a little more adventurous then there is almost every activity you can think of available here. In the centre of town you will also find the Monteith's brewery and a tour is highly worthwhile. Greymouth is also where the TranzAlpine train arrives and departs. Just south of Greymouth is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shantytown Heritage Park Experience

Shantytown is a faithfully restored replica of an 1860's West Coast gold mining town. It is a living monument to the hardy pioneers who forded the wildly exotic rivers and streams and scrambled through the rugged subtropical rainforest in search of their fortunes. A 20 minute ride on one of the original bush steam trains takes you deep into gold country. Among the collection of pioneer relics and Kiwiana that has come to comprise Shantytown's unique and valuable collection are some true gems. This vast and significant collection is housed in over 30 historic buildings, enabling you to wander your way through the town as interlopers into a bygone era. You'll also get to try your hand at gold-panning under the helpful tuition of the highly experienced gold claim staff.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Greymouth

Experience true West Coast hospitality at Bella Vista Greymouth. A great base for all your West Coast adventures. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the town centre for shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 14



TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Considered one of the world's great train journeys, the TranzAlpine Scenic Train takes you from Greymouth to Christchurch. You'll travel across the South Island from the west to the east coast through Arthur's Pass National Park. From the comfort of your carriage see lush beech forest, deep river valleys and the spectacular peaks of the Southern Alps. Descend to the windswept Canterbury Plains before arriving in the city of Christchurch.

Shared Transfer from the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring

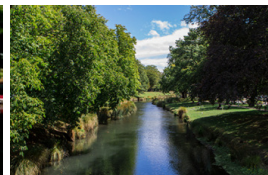
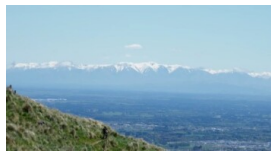
On arrival at the Christchurch railway station, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping center and only a short walk to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 15



Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

A private transfer will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Queenstown
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	15
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 2	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 3	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 4	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 5	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 6	Havenz Punakaiki (Self check in required)
Day 7	Arthurs Pass Alpine Motel
Day 8	The White Morph, Kaikoura
Day 9	Bella Vista Blenheim
Day 10	Ocean View Chalets
Day 11	Ocean View Chalets
Day 12	Buller Bridge Motel
Day 13	Bella Vista Greymouth
Day 14	Quest on Cambridge